

**Listing of Claims:**

1. (Currently Amended) A pole connector assembly for connecting first and second pole sections, the pole connector assembly comprising:  
an insert dimensioned to be received within an end of the first pole section, the insert having a one-piece unitary body, an aperture defined in the one-piece unitary body, and a deflectable portion of the one-piece unitary body; and  
a deformable fastener having a first end insertable into the aperture, the fastener having at least one surface positioned to contact and limit deflection of the at least one deflectable portion to less than that needed to permit removal of the insert from the first pole section, the fastener also having a second end coupled to the second pole section.
2. (Previously Presented) The pole connector assembly as claimed in claim 1, wherein the deflectable portion of the one-piece unitary body comprises at least one projection, the at least one projection being deflectable with respect to a remainder of the one-piece unitary body, and wherein the fastener is insertable into the aperture to limit inward deflection of the at least one projection of the insert.
3. (Canceled).
4. (Original) The pole connector assembly as claimed in claim 1, wherein the fastener further comprises a base and at least one projection extending from the base, the at least one projection being deflectable with respect to the base of the fastener.
5. (Original) The pole connector assembly as claimed in claim 4, wherein the at least one projection of the fastener is shaped to engage the insert in a tongue-and-groove connection.
6. (Original) The pole connector assembly as claimed in claim 2, further comprising a recess in an end of the at least one projection, wherein the fastener further comprises at least one projection received within the recess in an inserted position of the fastener in the aperture.

7. (Original) The pole connector assembly as claimed in claim 2, wherein the fastener is insertable into the insert to deflect the at least one projection toward an internal surface of the first pole section.

8. (Original) The pole connector assembly as claimed in claim 2, wherein the fastener is insertable within the insert without appreciable deflection of the at least one projection.

9. (Original) The pole connector assembly as claimed in claim 1, wherein the fastener is U-shaped.

10. (Original) The pole connector assembly as claimed in claim 1, wherein the fastener is insertable into the aperture in a press-fit engagement.

11. (Original) The pole connector assembly as claimed in claim 1, wherein the fastener is insertable into the aperture to frictionally engage the fastener in the insert.

12. (Currently Amended) A pole connector assembly for connecting first and second pole sections, the pole connector assembly comprising:

an insert dimensioned to be received within an end of the first pole section, the

insert having:

an insert body having at least one portion being deflectable with respect to a remainder of the insert body; and

an aperture defined in the insert body; and

a fastener having a first end insertable into the aperture and movable to a position with respect to the at least one portion of the insert body in which a surface of the fastener contacts and substantially limits deflection of the at least one portion of the insert body to less than that needed to permit removal of the insert from the first pole section, ~~and~~ a second end coupled to the second pole section, and a fastener body having at least one inwardly-deflectable portion.

13. (Currently Amended) The pole connector assembly as claimed in claim 12, wherein the first end of the fastener is insertable into the aperture to deflect the at least one portion of the insert body toward an internal surface of the first pole section.

14. (Currently Amended) The pole connector assembly as claimed in claim 12, wherein insertion of the fastener into the aperture generates no appreciable deflection of the at least one portion of the insert body.

15. (Original) The pole connector assembly as claimed in claim 12, wherein the fastener further comprises a collar portion shaped to be received in at least a portion of the insert, the collar portion having an enlarged cross-sectional area relative to a remainder of the fastener.

16. (Currently Amended) The pole connector assembly as claimed in claim 12, wherein the at least one portion of the insert body includes at least ten projections.

17. (Currently Amended) The pole connector assembly as claimed in claim 12, wherein the at least one portion of the insert body includes at least four projections.

18. (Currently Amended) The pole connector assembly as claimed in claim 12, wherein the at least one portion of the insert body is shaped to engage an internal wall of the first pole section.

19. (Canceled).

20. (Currently Amended) The pole connector assembly as claimed in ~~claim 19~~ claim 12, wherein the at least one inwardly-deflectable portion of the fastener body is shaped to engage an internal wall of the insert in at least one of a tongue-and-groove engagement and a snap-fit engagement.

21. (Currently Amended) The pole connector assembly as claimed in ~~claim 19~~ claim 12, further comprising a recess defined in an end of the at least one portion of the insert body, wherein the at least one inwardly-deflectable portion of the fastener body defines an enlarged end of the fastener shaped to be received within the recess in the insert body.

22. (Original) The pole connector assembly as claimed in claim 12, wherein the first and second ends of the fastener each have at least one inwardly-deflectable portion.

23. (Original) The pole connector assembly as claimed in claim 12, wherein the fastener is U-shaped.

24. (Previously Presented) A pole connector assembly for connection of two sections of a pole, the pole connector assembly comprising:

an insert dimensioned to be received within an end of a first pole section, the insert having a body portion and an aperture defined in the body portion; and  
a deformable fastener engagable within the aperture in the body portion of the insert and connectable to a second pole section, the deformable fastener having a position within the insert in which a deformable portion of the deformable fastener located within the first pole section prevents removal of the insert from the first pole section.

25. (Original) The pole connector assembly as claimed in claim 24, wherein the fastener is resiliently deformable.

26. (Original) The pole connector assembly as claimed in claim 24, wherein the fastener is resiliently engageable with an internal wall of the insert at least partially defining the aperture.

27. (Original) The pole connector assembly as claimed in claim 24, wherein the fastener includes at least one projection, the at least one projection deflectable with respect to a remainder of the fastener upon insertion of the fastener into the insert.

28. (Original) The pole connector assembly as claimed in claim 27, wherein the at least one projection of the fastener has an outwardly-protruding enlarged end engagable with an end of the insert in an inserted position of the fastener in the insert.

29. (Original) The pole connector assembly as claimed in claim 24, wherein the fastener is generally U-shaped.

30. (Original) A pole assembly, comprising:

- a first pole section;

- a second pole section;

- a first insert received within the first pole section;

- a second insert received within the second pole section;

- each of the first and second inserts having:

- a base;

- at least one deflectable projection extending from the base; and

- an aperture defined in the base; and

- a fastener having opposite ends received within the apertures of the first and second

- inserts, the fastener having a base and at least one deflectable projection extending from the base, the at least one deflectable projection of the fastener inter-engageable with the insert to limit inward deflection of the at least one deflectable projection of the insert.

31. (Original) The pole assembly as claimed in claim 30, wherein the at least one deflectable projection of the fastener includes an outwardly-protruding enlarged end engagable with a terminal end of one of the first and second inserts.

32. (Original) The pole assembly as claimed in claim 30, wherein the fastener further comprises a collar portion shaped to be received within at least one of the first and second inserts.

33. (Original) The pole assembly as claimed in claim 30, wherein the fastener is U-shaped.

34. (Original) The pole assembly as claimed in claim 30, wherein the ends of the fastener are insertable into the apertures of the first and second inserts to deflect the deflectable projections of the first and second inserts toward internal surfaces of the first and second pole sections.

35. (Original) The pole assembly as claimed in claim 30, wherein the ends of the fastener are each insertable into the apertures of the first and second inserts without generating appreciable deflection of the deflectable projections of the first and second inserts.

36. (Currently Amended) A method of assembling a pole, comprising:

- inserting a first insert into an end of a first pole section, the first insert having at least one inwardly-deflectable projection;
- inserting a fastener comprising at least one projection into an aperture in the first insert, wherein the at least one projection of the fastener is deflectable with respect to a remainder of the fastener;
- contacting a portion of the fastener with the at least one inwardly-deflectable projection of the insert;
- limiting inward deflection of the at least one inwardly-deflectable projection of the insert with the portion of the fastener; and
- coupling the fastener to a second pole section, wherein inserting the fastener includes deflecting the at least one projection of the fastener.

37. (Canceled).

38. (Currently Amended) The method as claimed in claim 36, wherein:

- the fastener comprises:
  - ~~at least one projection deflectable with respect to a remainder of the~~
  - ~~fastener; and~~
- an outwardly-protruding enlarged end; and
- ~~wherein~~ inserting the fastener includes deflecting the at least one projection of the fastener until the outwardly-protruding enlarged end is inserted through the aperture in the insert.

39. (Original) The method as claimed in claim 36, wherein:

- the fastener is deformable; and
- inserting the fastener includes deforming at least a portion of the fastener.

40. (Original) The method as claimed in claim 39, wherein inserting the fastener includes resiliently deforming at least a portion of the fastener.

41. (Original) The method as claimed in claim 36, wherein the at least one inwardly-deflectable projection of the insert is deflected outwardly responsive to inserting the fastener.

42. (Original) The method as claimed in claim 36, wherein coupling the fastener to the second pole section includes performing the limiting and coupling steps with a second insert and a second pole section.